Communication Survey Results

WATERLOO
ENGINEERING SOCIETY

Contents

1   Introduction

The Waterloo Engineering Society aims to serve its members through its three main focuses of representation, services, and events. In order to be effective in doing so, the Engineering Society must be able to inform students about society-related news. Currently, the Society's main communications channels to students are its Facebook page and mailing lists. Other channels such as Twitter, Instagram, class representatives, and physical outlets in engineering buildings (i.e. poster boards, LCD screens, calendar) are also used to communicate to students.

This communications survey is an initiative by the VP Communications of both A-Society and B-Society. As a whole, the Engineering Society is interested in knowing how it can improve its current communications efforts to better conduct outreach to the student body and engage more members.

2   Methodology

The survey was sent out in the winter 2017 term and was available to be completed from February 25, 2017 to March 15, 2017. The survey was advertised through both Societies' mailing lists, on the Facebook page, and on Twitter. To encourage students to complete the survey, several raffle prizes were offered.

Overall, the survey had a great response rate of 259 students. 105 of the respondents were from A-Society while 154 of the respondents were from B-Society.

3 Analysis

3.1 Facebook

Do you follow the Waterloo Engineering Society on Facebook?

If you do not follow the Waterloo Engineering Society on Facebook, why?
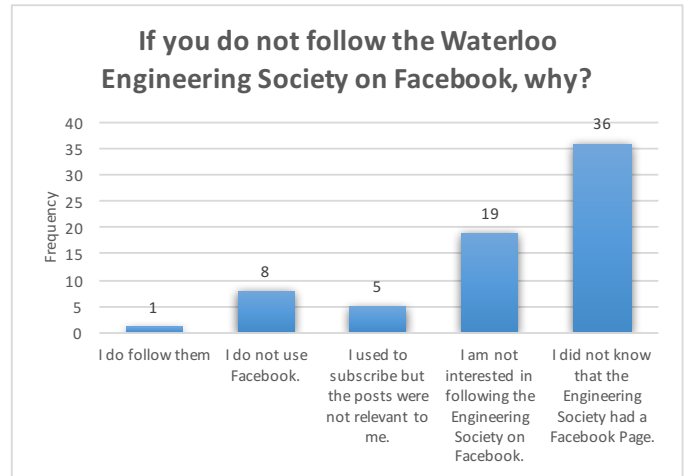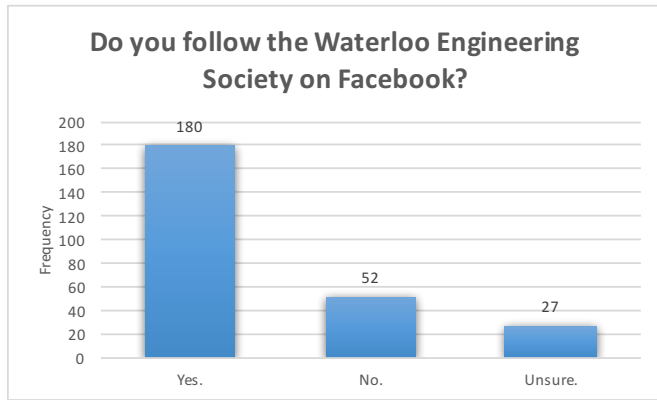
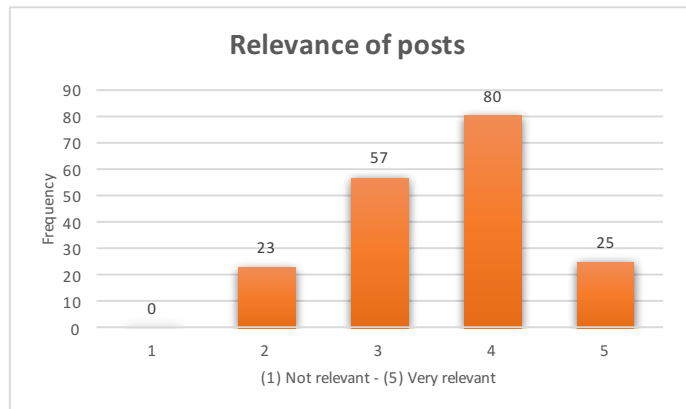From the graphs above, it can be observed that the majority of the respondents follow the Waterloo Engineering Society Facebook page. The ones who did not were either uninterested or unaware that the Facebook page existed.

Frequency of posts
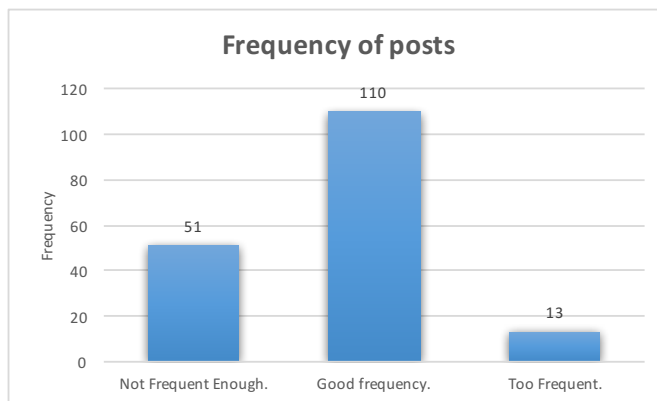
Relevance of posts

Most students are satisfied with the frequency of the Facebook posts, but a significant number feel that posts are not frequent enough. With regards to relevance, students are generally satisfied with the relevancy of the posts on the Facebook page, although there is room for improvement.

I am more likely to attend Engineering Society events when there is a Facebook event.
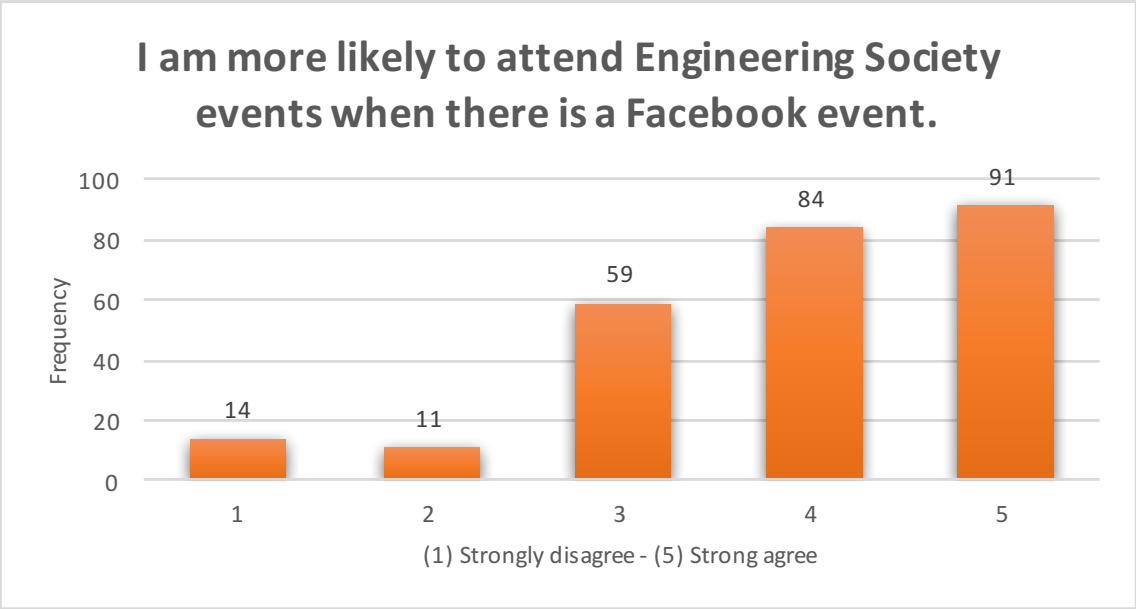
With the majority of the respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing, it seems that Facebook events are effective in encouraging students to attend Engineering Society events.

In the past, I have attended a Waterloo Engineering Society event after seeing it on Facebook.
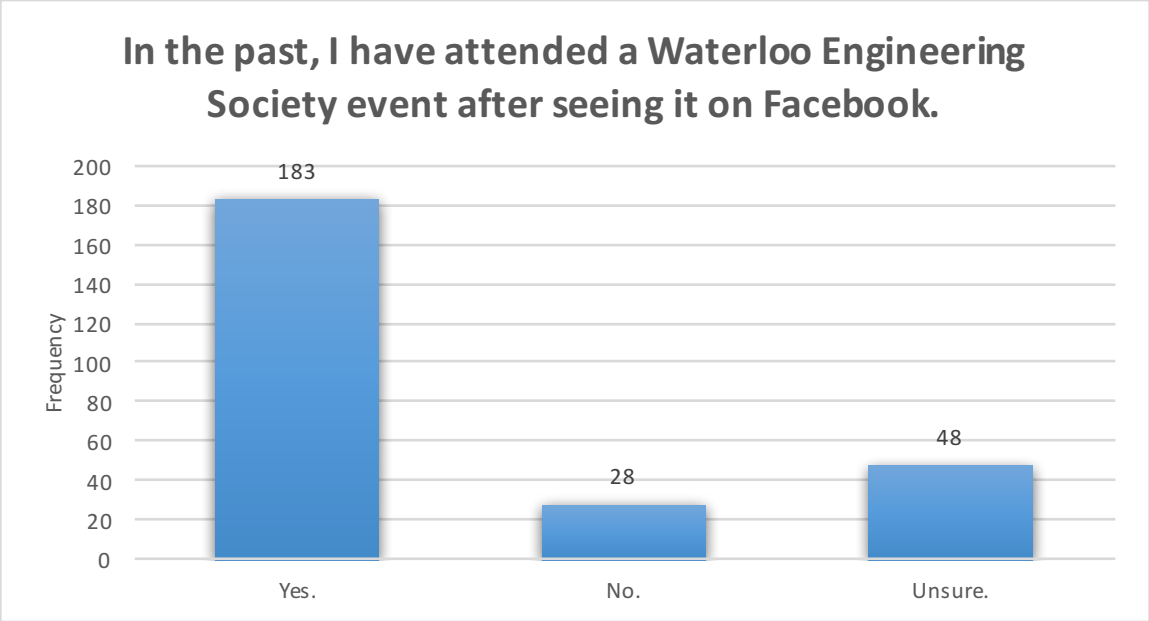
The above graph reaffirms the notion that Facebook events are effective in informing students about Engineering Society events.

3.2 Mailing List

Do you subscribe to the Engineering Society mailing list?

A bar chart showing Frequency on the y-axis (0 to 250). Yes: 196, No: 47, Unsure: 16.

If you do not subscribe to the Engineering Society mailing list, why?

A bar chart showing Frequency on the y-axis (0 to 30). I am not interested in subscribing to the Engineering Society mailing list: 13, I used to subscribe but the emails were not relevant to me: 9, I did not know the Engineering Society had a mailing list: 26.
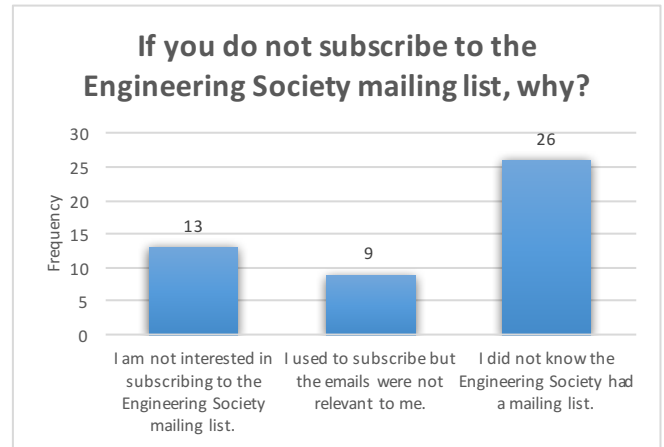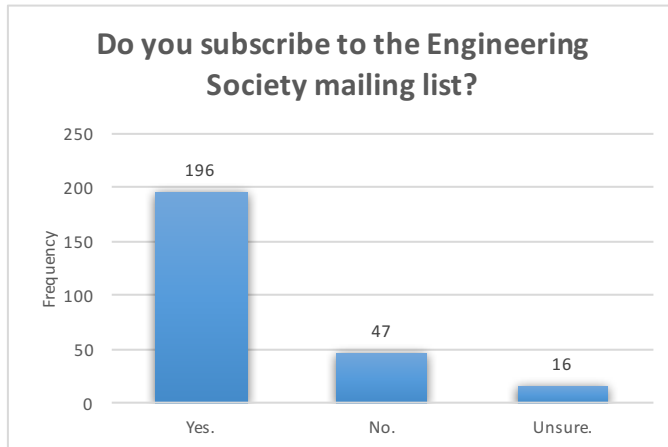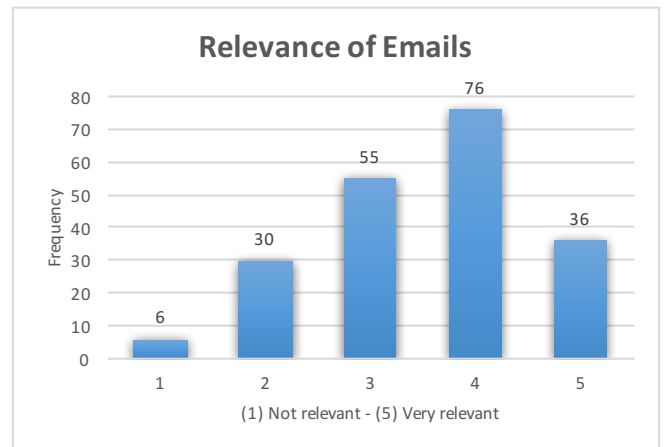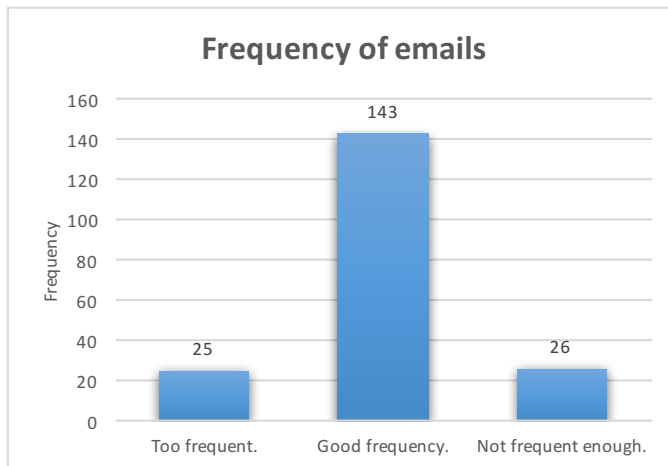
From the graphs above, it can be observed that the majority of the respondents subscribe to the Waterloo Engineering Society mailing lists. Most of the ones who did not were unaware that these mailing lists existed.

Frequency of emails

A bar chart showing Frequency on the y-axis (0 to 160). Too frequent: 25, Good frequency: 143, Not frequent enough: 26.

Relevance of Emails

A bar chart showing Frequency on the y-axis (0 to 80). 1: 6, 2: 30, 3: 55, 4: 76, 5: 36. (1) Not relevant - (5) Very relevant.

The vast majority of students are satisfied with the frequency of emails sent through the mailing list. The number of people who feel that emails are too frequent is roughly equal to the number of people who feel that emails are no frequent enough. As a result, it is unlikely that anything can be done to appease one group without displeasing the other.

While the overall relevancy of the emails is positively skewed, the respondents indicated that this is lower relative to that of the Facebook posts. More students were neutral or ranked relevancy low for the mailing list.

3.3 Twitter

Do you follow the Waterloo Engineering Society on Twitter?

Yes	14
No	231
Unsure	14

If you do not follow the Waterloo Engineering Society on Twitter, why?

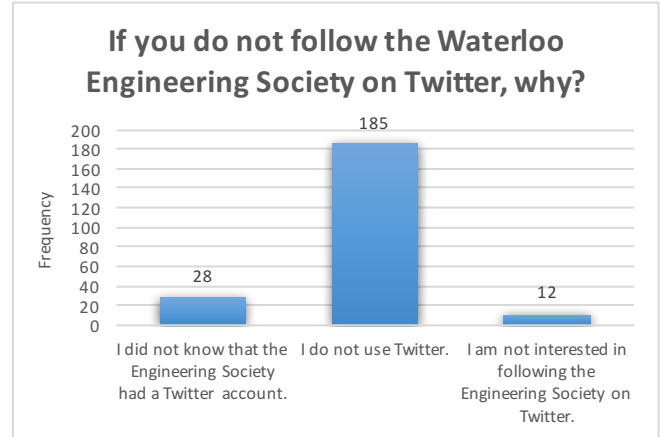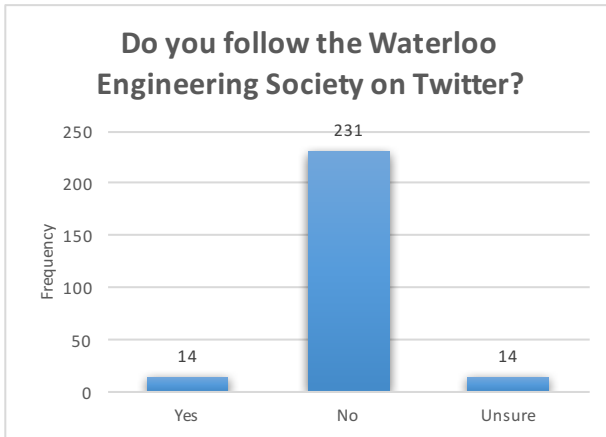|	
I did not know that the Engineering Society had a Twitter account.	28
I do not use Twitter.	185
I am not interested in following the Engineering Society on Twitter.	12

From the graphs above, it can be observed that the majority of the respondents do <u>not</u> follow the Waterloo Engineering Society Twitter account. Most of these students do not use Twitter, while the rest were unaware that the Engineering Society had a Twitter account. Only 14 respondents said that they were followers.

Due to the very low number of followers, the data collected on the frequency and relevancy of Tweets from the Engineering Society account was not considered.

I am more likely to attend Engineering Society events when I see them on Twitter.

(1) Strongly disagree - (5) Strong agree	Frequency
1	114
2	44
3	86
4	10
5	5
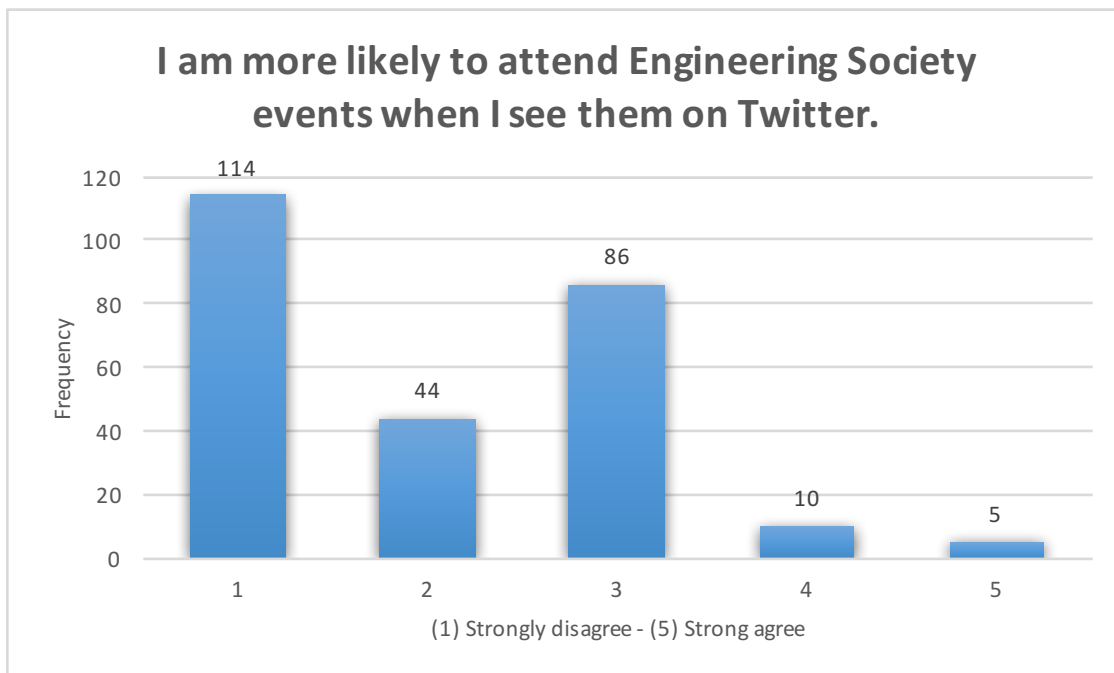
From the graph on the previous page, it appears that Twitter has very little to no positive effect on influencing students to attend Engineering Society events.

3.4 Instagram

Did you know the Waterloo Engineering Society is on Instagram?

Frequency

Yes.	40
No.	204
Unsure.	11
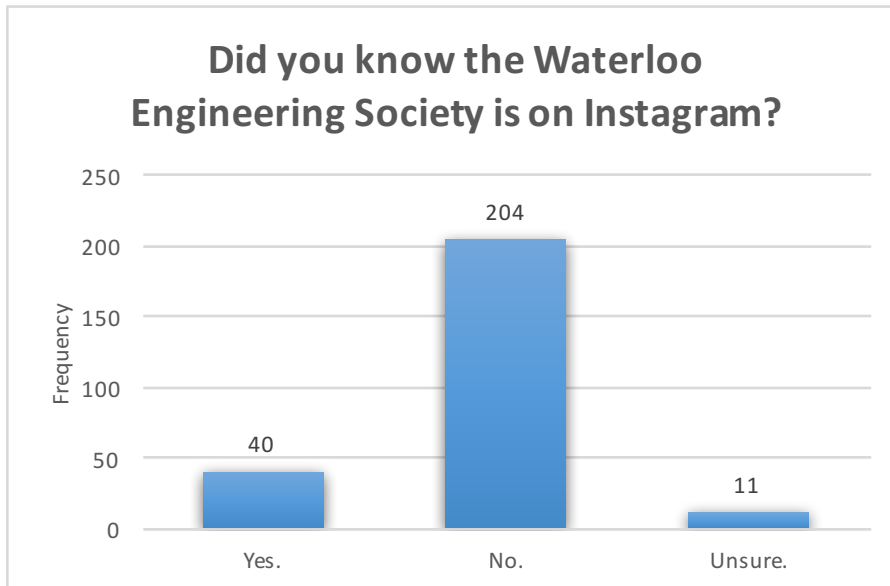
It can be seen that most of the respondents are unaware of the Engineering Society Instagram account.

Please indicate how you like the content on the Engineering Society Instagram?

Frequency

(1) Strongly dislike - (5) Like very much

1	2	3	4	5
4	3	63	22	4
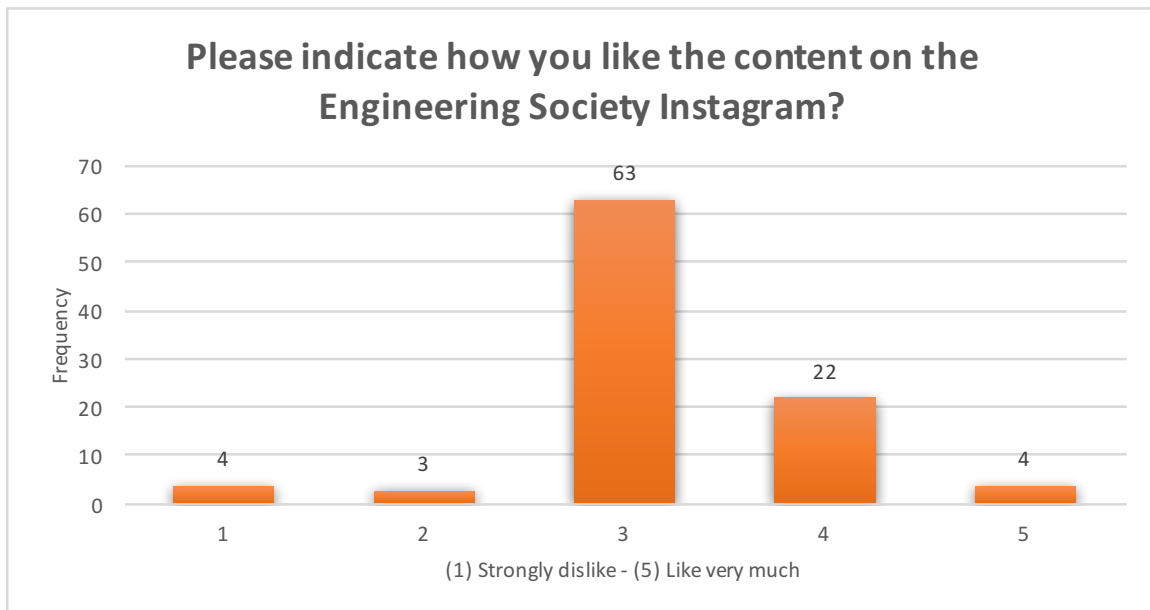
Although only 40 students said that they were aware of the Instagram account, more than 40 people rate the content on the account. As a result, the data from the above graph is likely inaccurate and will not be weighted much. It is slightly positively skewed, but most respondents felt neutral about the content.

3.5 Class representatives

Does your class have Engineering Society Class Representatives?

Frequency

- Yes. — 234
- No. — 6
- Unsure. — 19
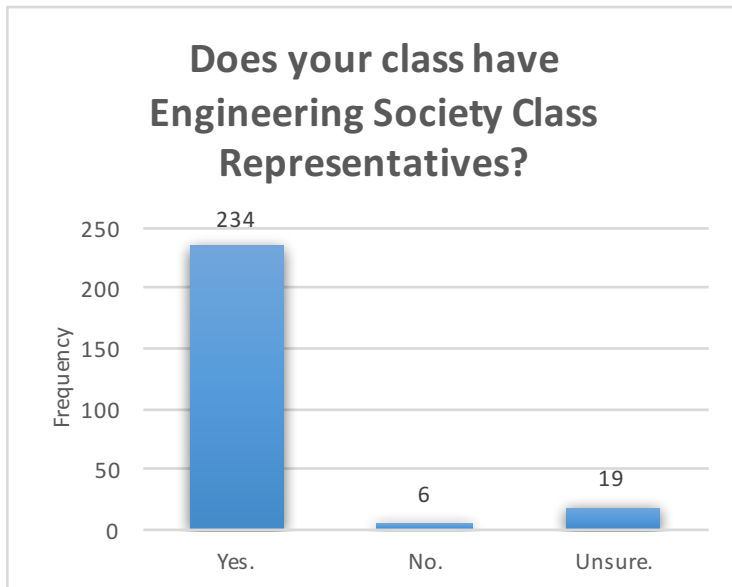
Most of the respondents were in classes that had class representatives.

How do your Engineering Society Class Representatives relay information about the Engineering Society to your class?

Frequency

- Class Annoucements — 146
- Facebook Posts — 207
- Calendar or message board — 10
- No Information — 29
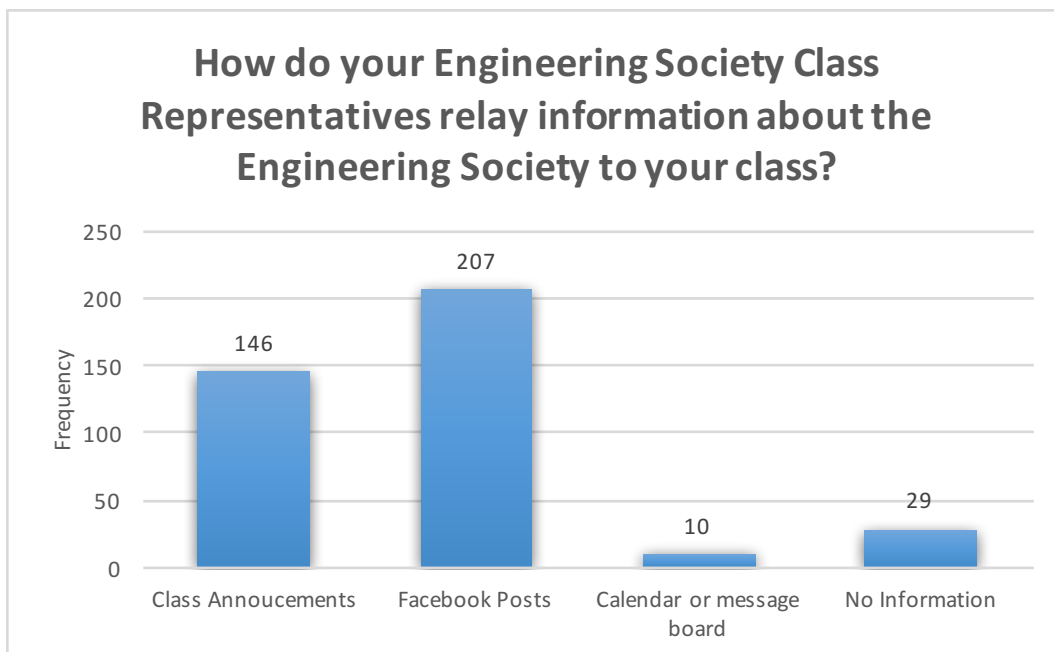
Most of the class representatives of the respondents relayed information about the Engineering Society through in-class announcements and Facebook posts.

How well do your Engineering Society Class Representatives relay information about the Engineering Society to your class?

(Bar chart — Frequency vs. rating scale)

Rating	Frequency
1	27
2	46
3	92
4	66
5	28

(1) Never - (5) Often or always
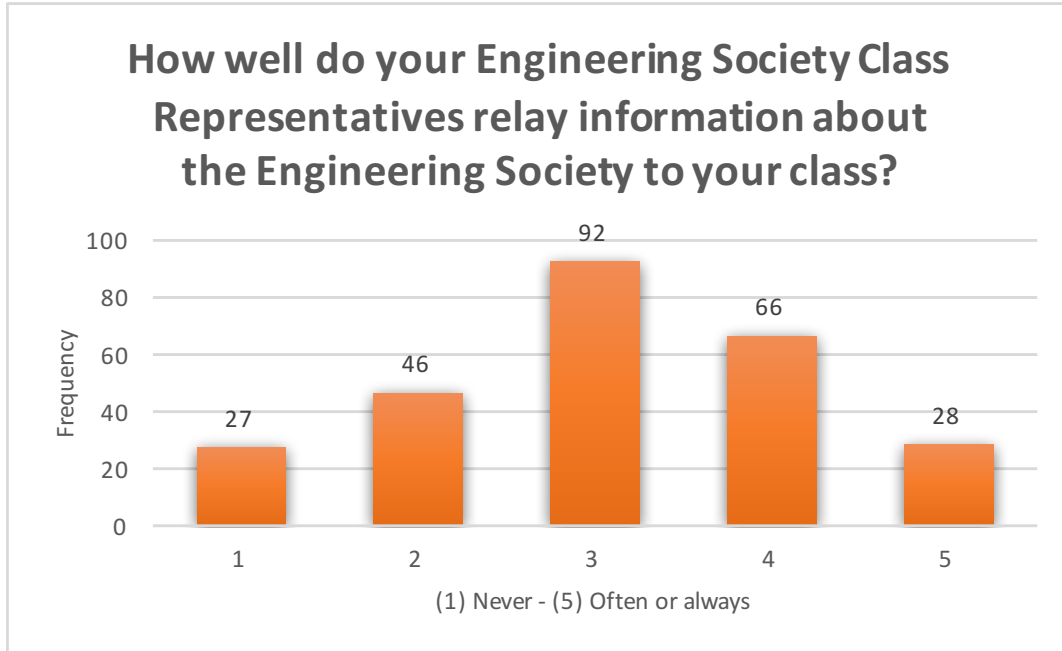
Overall, the ratings of how well information is relayed by the class representatives is normally distributed.

4   Recommendations

From the above analysis, several conclusions can be drawn about the effectiveness of each channel. From these conclusions, the VP Communications from both Societies have put forward recommendations to change certain aspects of how the Engineering Society communicates to its members.

4.1   Facebook

Overall, the results for the Facebook page were more positive than expected. Most of the survey respondents were satisfied with the frequency and relevance, although some desired more. Going forward, the following action items can be implemented:

- Investigate ways to make the Facebook page less cluttered by auto-generated event posts and introduce more non-event posts
- Increase the appeal of Facebook posts by running occasional campaigns (e.g. the National Engineering Month student profiles conducted in March 2017)
- Hire a social media director for Facebook specifically to boost engagement

4.2   Mailing List

Similar to Facebook, the results for the mailing list were more positive than expected. The Engineering Society currently has a surprisingly low unsubscribed rate but does have a low click rate (metric for gauging how many recipients actually open the email). With the introduction of new mailing list categories, the major challenge for the near future will be transitioning students to use the new categories. Going forward, the following actions can be implemented:

- Advertise the fact that the Engineering Society has new mailing list categories on a regular basis and incentivize students to switch over
- Once a critical number of students have switched over, abide by the new categories and only send emails to those who are subscribed
- Ensure consistency in the format of emails from term to term, and potentially between Societies

4.3   Twitter

The results of the Engineering Society Twitter account indicate that Twitter is not effective in engaging students and should thus be treated as a low priority. Currently, the Twitter account auto-generates tweets every time a new Facebook post is created. The VP Communications feel that it is unnecessary to change Twitter as it currently stands.

4.4   Instagram

While the number of people who follow the Engineering Society Instagram account is relatively low, there seems to be some potential for growing this platform in the future. Some actionable items include:

- Hire a social media director for Instagram to increase the number of followers and curate engaging content (e.g. people spotlights, takeovers)
- Focus the platform on showcasing highlights of the Engineering Society's events and move away from providing details such as dates, times, etc.

4.5   Class representatives

While the data collected on the class representatives is interesting, there are no strong recommendations that can be made for this communication channel. The effectiveness of using class representatives to relay information to their classes has always been dependent on how much effort the individual representatives put into their roles. This issue has been recognized and is addressed on an ongoing basis through changes made to the operation of Council.

4.6   Content

In addition to the questions summarized by previously shown graphs, the survey also asked students to select the type of information that they would like to see relayed through each communication channel. The results can be seen in the following graphs:

What kinds of information should be sent out on the Engineering Society Facebook Page?

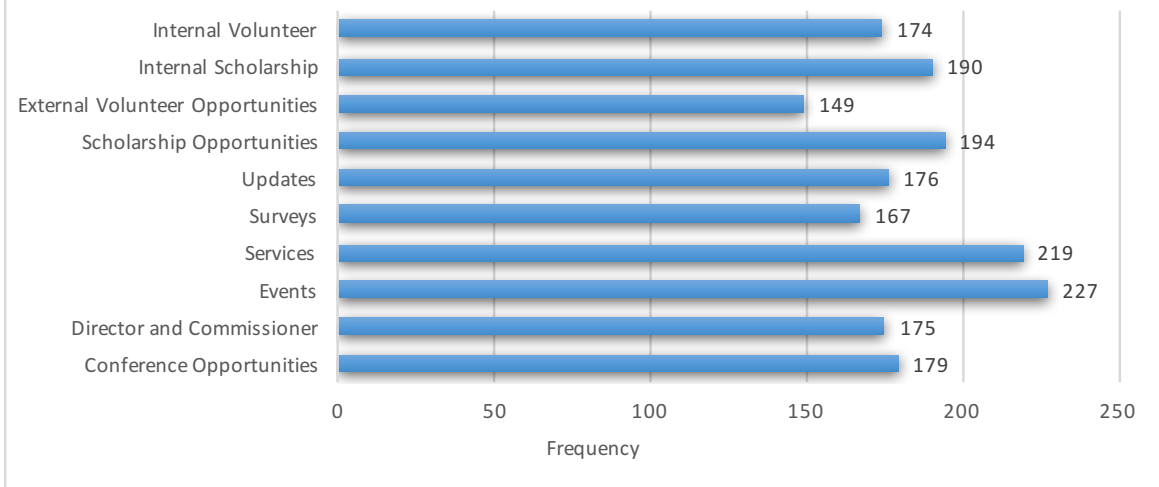| Category	Frequency
Internal Volunteer	175
Internal Scholarship	190
External Volunteer Opportunities	134
Scholarship Opportunities	204
Updates	191
Surveys	167
Services	230
Events	245
Director and Commissioner	150
Conference Opportunities	174

Frequency

What kinds of information should be sent out on the Engineering Society mailing list?

Category	Frequency
Internal Volunteer	174
Internal Scholarship	190
External Volunteer Opportunities	149
Scholarship Opportunities	194
Updates	176
Surveys	167
Services	219
Events	227
Director and Commissioner	175
Conference Opportunities	179

Frequency

What kinds of information should be sent out on the Engineering Society Twitter Account?

Category	Frequency
Internal Volunteer	90
Internal Scholarship	98
External Volunteer Opportunities	81
Scholarship Opportunities	105
Updates	176
Surveys	98
Services	158
Events	212
Director and Commissioner	95
Conference Opportunities	102

Frequency

What kinds of information should be relayed by Class Representatives?

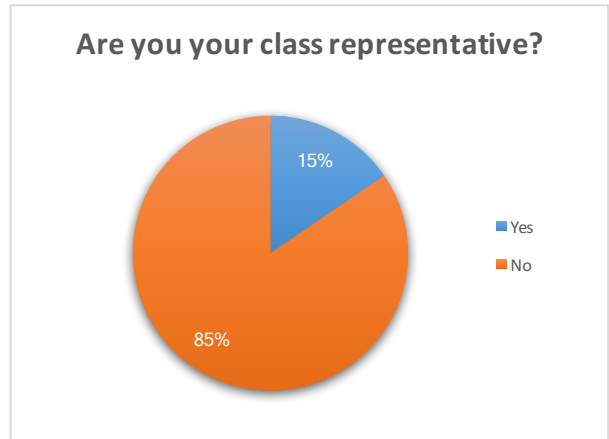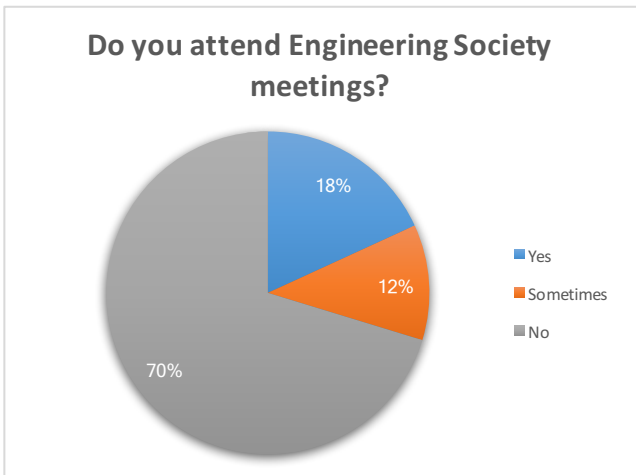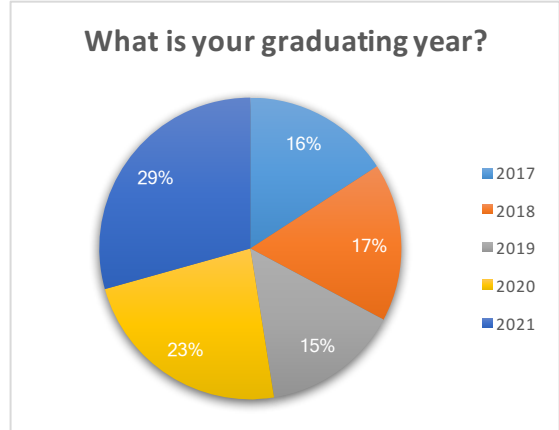| Category	Frequency
Internal Volunteer	107
Internal Scholarship	97
External Volunteer Opportunities	74
Scholarship Opportunities	100
Updates	124
Surveys	88
Services	205
Events	230
Director and Commissioner	99
Conference Opportunities	119

Frequency
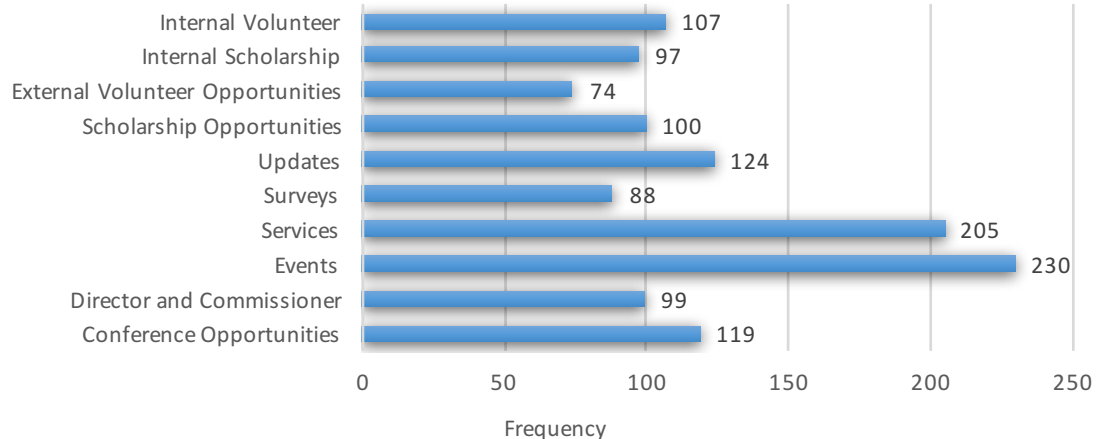
Overall, it seems that the two most popular categories are events and services across all platforms. The only exception is Twitter, which has updates as its second most-requested type of information. The Engineering Society already advertises its events and services most heavily and will continue to do so given this data.

5   Conclusion

With a relatively good response rate and a lot of useful the data, the communications survey was able to provide many meaningful insights into the effectiveness of the Engineering Society's communications. While the results were more positive than expected, several areas of improvement could still be identified. Appropriate recommendations were made and should be implemented by the VP Communications, Advertising Commissioner, and any other relevant offices within the Engineering Society going forward.

Appendix A: General Data Charts

What is your program?

Legend:
- Biomedical
- Chemical
- Civil
- Computer
- Electrical
- Environmental
- Geological
- Management
- Mechanical
- Mechatronics
- Nanotechnology
- Software
- Systems Design

What is your graduating year?

Legend:
- 2017 — 16%
- 2018 — 17%
- 2019 — 15%
- 2020 — 23%
- 2021 — 29%

Do you attend Engineering Society meetings?

- Yes — 18%
- Sometimes — 12%
- No — 70%

Are you your class representative?

- Yes — 15%
- No — 85%

Do you attend Engineering Society events?

(1) Never or very rarely - (5) Very often	Frequency
1	70
2	81
3	64
4	38
5	6

Do you enjoy the events that you attend?

Frequency

120 · 100 · 80 · 60 · 40 · 20 · 0

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

32, 14, 64, 103, 46

(1) Never or very rarely - (5) Enjoys all events
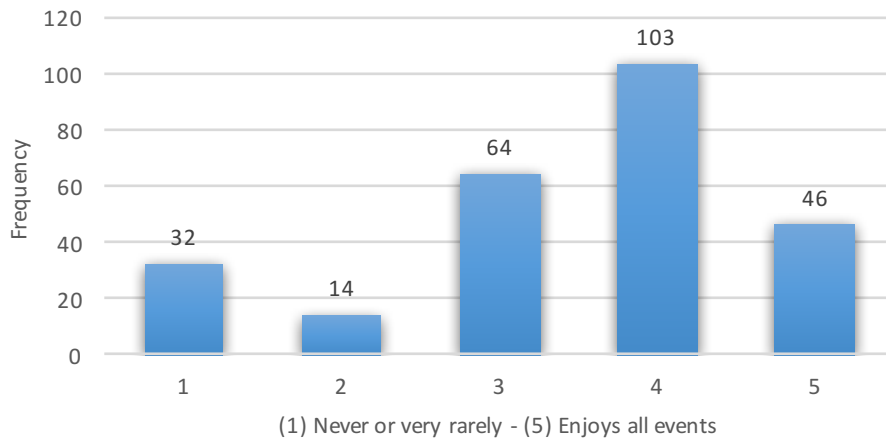
Would you be more likely to be involved with the Engineering Society if you received better communication about events and services offered?

12%

20%

68%
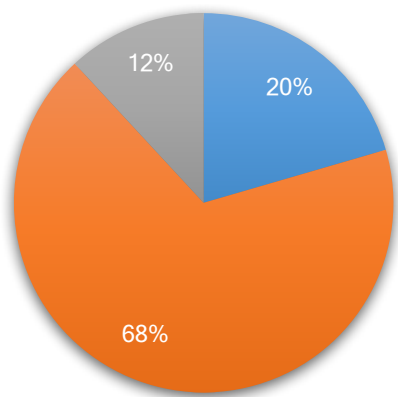
- Yes, I would participate more if I knew more about the Engineering Society.

- Maybe, it depends on whether or not these events are of interest to me.

- No, I am currently as involved with the Engineering Society to the fullest extent I would like to be.

Where do you currently receive your Engineering Society updates?

Chart — bar graph. X-axis: Medium. Y-axis: Frequency.

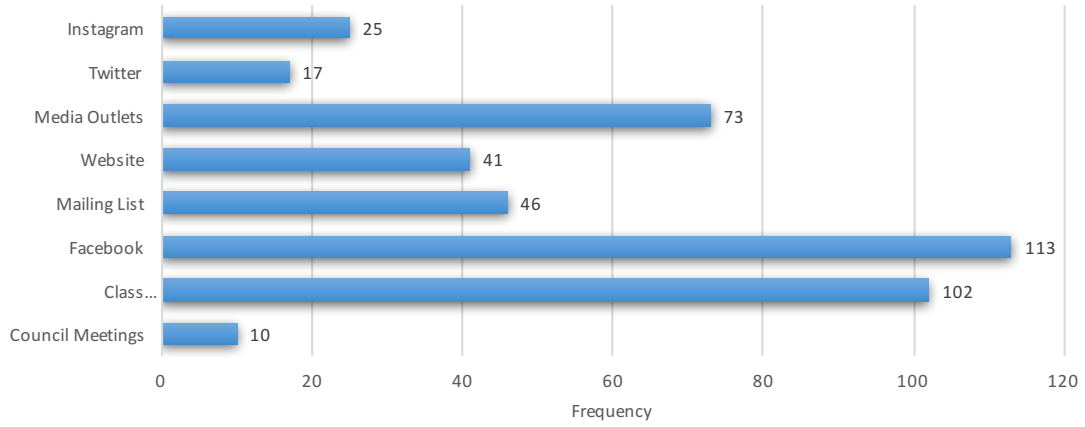| Medium	Frequency
Council Meetings	48
Class...	109
Facebook	185
Mailing List	179
Website	16
Media Outlets	79
Twitter	5
Instagram	3

How do you prefer to hear about Engineering Society events?

Chart — bar graph. X-axis: Medium. Y-axis: Frequency.

Medium	Frequency
Council Meetings	28
Class Representatives	110
Facebook	178
Mailing List	169
Website	30
Media Outlets	85
Twitter	13
Instagram	14

What would you say are issues with EngSoc's current communications with students?

Chart — bar graph. Y-axis: Frequency.

Issue	Frequency
Not customizable enough.	84
Not frequent enough.	97
Not transparent enough, content feels un-engaging	70

Where should the Engineering Society increase its level of communication?

Category	Frequency
Instagram	25
Twitter	17
Media Outlets	73
Website	41
Mailing List	46
Facebook	113
Class...	102
Council Meetings	10

Frequency

Where should the Engineering Society decrease its level of communication?

Category	Frequency
Nowhere	132
Instagram	13
Twitter	14
Media Outlets	8
Website	6
Mailing List	23
Facebook	7
Class Representatives	10
Council Meetings	15

Frequency